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Letter dated 6 November 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the First Committee

I have the honour to request that the present letter and its annex be issued as an official document of the First Committee.

(*Signed*) Jorge Eduardo **Navarrete**

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Annex to the letter dated 6 November 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the First Committee

Reductions of non-strategic nuclear weapons

New York, 24 October 2001

This paper is supported by Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden, members of the New Agenda Initiative.

We welcome the landmark outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in particular the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament. We remain committed to the fulfilment of the practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement article VI of the Treaty which were agreed at that Conference.

Moreover, at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, there was agreement to the further reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons, based on unilateral initiatives and as an integral part of the nuclear arms reduction and disarmament process.

The progress achieved in strategic nuclear weapon reductions made unilaterally or bilaterally under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) process constitutes, in our view, an important step towards nuclear disarmament.

Although we acknowledge that progress has been achieved in non-strategic nuclear weapon reductions based on the unilateral declaration of the United States of America of 27 September 1991, the unilateral declaration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of 5 October 1991 and the unilateral declaration of the Russian Federation of 29 January 1992, we remain deeply concerned that the total number of nuclear weapons deployed and in stockpile still amounts to many thousands.

We note in the 21 March 1997 Joint Statement on Parameters on Future Reductions in Nuclear Forces by the United States and the Russian Federation in particular that, in the context of START III negotiations, it is expressed that their experts will explore, as separate issues, possible measures relating to tactical nuclear systems, to include appropriate confidence-building and transparency measures.

We believe it is essential to preserve and to build upon the 1991/1992 Presidential Nuclear Initiatives on non-strategic nuclear weapons. In this context, we are convinced that urgent action should be taken to achieve:

- Further reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons, based on unilateral initiatives and as an integral part of the nuclear arms reduction and disarmament process;
- Further confidence-building and transparency measures to reduce the threats posed by non-strategic nuclear weapons;
- Concrete agreed measures to reduce further the operational status of nuclear weapons systems.

As countries committed to nuclear disarmament, we urge the United States and the Russian Federation to proceed with the reductions of non-strategic nuclear weapons in a transparent and irreversible manner and to include reduction and elimination of non-strategic nuclear weapons in the overall arms reduction negotiations.

Convinced that, in the present situation, the strengthened dialogue and sense of convergence provide a unique opportunity to move forward, we also invite the international community to lend its support and encouragement to this endeavour.